

Near Northwest Neighborhood, Inc.
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nearnorthwest.org



The Art of Neighboring

by Dré Northern

“Not to know is bad. Not to wish to know is worse.” African Proverb

No matter where you stand or what you believe concerning current events today, there is one thing I believe we all can agree on: the year 2020 has been a monumental year. And we are only just over halfway through this year. It has been a year where many things that lurked just beneath the surface of our society have broken through and demanded the attention of all.

Without a doubt, the largest trials of 2020 thus far have been the elements of working together as a nation facing the COVID-19 pandemic crisis combined with the long standing element of racial inequality being brought to the forefront of our attention from tragic events. The duality of these social phenomena seem to have brought some of us closer together, but others further apart all at the same time. In settling into my new role as the Community Organizer for the Near Northwest Neighborhood, I set out with the mission to continue to make the NNN a shining example of what a neighborhood thriving in diversity and defining what the art of neighboring looks like. A neighborhood where people step past their comfort zones to find commonality with those they may initially only see profound differences with the goal of creating a better quality of life for all. Almost immediately, conversations I planned to have with NNN residents and friends in the most ceremonial and organized of manners were postponed indefinitely. As unconventional as the dozens of ensuing conversations have been, one thing has become clear to me: the circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic and the murders of Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery and George Floyd set a precedent for those who do not understand living a life of feeling constantly marginalized to begin asking questions of those, including myself, who have.

What I've concluded from 2020 thus far is there is a commonality in experiencing systematic racism and the tone in dealing with COVID-19. Some have doubts in the existence of either. The commonality is that those who have the most doubt simply have not experienced the devastation of either condition. If there is one thing I'd want them to ascertain, it would be that acknowledgement from those who have not or may never experience these things isn't a hurdle that needs to be cleared to make it any less real for those who have. Be that on the frontlines or firsthand.

For the many I've spoken with in the past months who have expressed to me that 2020 gave you a set of new lenses to view the world, I challenge you to go further. Seize this unique time in our society as an opportunity to grow. Extend your own recent experiences of perhaps feeling restricted, restrained, and haunted by constant anxiety past the scope of your own personal experiences. For many of us this feeling is all too familiar. I won't say it will be easy, but growth rarely comes devoid of uncomfortableness. Do so perhaps with the goal of believing the growth you obtain will bring us all one step closer to making the NNN a place where improving the quality of life for those we see differences in is perhaps the truest way of improving the quality of life for all of us together.



Would you like to be on the NNN ListServ and be in contact with your neighbors about Community information and announcements? Please email or call us with your name and email address to nnnassistant@nearnorthwest.org or 232-9182. Ask us how to use our shared space, or find more information at <http://www.nearnorthwest.org/neighborhood-projects/community-space-use/>

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THE COMMON GROUND

Near Northwest
Neighborhood
INCORPORATED



NEWS YOU CAN USE

Near Northwest Neighborhood, Inc. 1007 Portage Ave. South Bend, IN 46616 574.232.9182

AUGUST 2020

From the NNN Board: Adopted Change to NNN Mission

Neighbors and Members of the Near Northwest Neighborhood, Inc. –

In the context of our work, of our neighborhood, of our City, and of our community we have often proclaimed and celebrated that one of the greatest assets of the NNN is the diversity included within this community. We take pride in this, we encourage it, we truly desire it and we celebrate it.

However.

However, we have spoken too infrequently about the disparities in our community, and the differences of experiences amongst our neighbors. Unequal housing opportunities and economic opportunities shape who we are, what we can expect, and our very health and future.

We despair in the recent murder of George Floyd, and locally of the killing of Eric Logan. We despair that this has been the “normal,” that we are all trying to not become numb. We have assumed an understanding of a system that won't change, that our community doesn't have the will to change. We share an understanding of long-term wounds that we don't know exactly how to approach or heal, even as we resent them, abhor them, and desire to heal them.

Our mission at the NNN has always been to revitalize this neighborhood. This organization was created in 1974, and we have had many shared successes, and also shared sorrows. We know that we love our neighbors, and that our neighbors pride themselves in the diversity and inclusiveness of the neighborhoods.

However.

Neighbors call the police when they are worried about people of color walking on the sidewalk. Recently, we were told this happened to a father, pushing his baby in a carriage. How is this father to feel? Included? Welcomed? That this is his neighborhood? That the very sight of him is suspicious?

This is one, singular, example – and not at all the shared experience of neighborhood revitalization that we strive for in our Mission.

So, as the Board members of the Near Northwest Neighborhood, Inc., we want to say some things about our mission very clearly:

Black Lives Matter.

Until this is a clear understanding of our community, and yes, including the NNN community – we are failing in our mission.

We are committed to this, and re-committed to centralizing this work in our organization. The flourishing of the NNN depends on it. (continued on Page 2)

Mission (continued from Page 1)

Reflecting on this, we propose and have prepared for a membership vote on adjusting our mission language:

Our Previous NNN Mission:

The Near Northwest Neighborhood, Inc. is an organization of dedicated to the preservation and revitalization of the neighborhood through:

- providing affordable housing to low-moderate income households,
- organizing and empowering community residents, and
- promoting the neighborhood's interest within the neighborhood and the entire community.

Our Proposed change to the NNN's Mission:

The Near Northwest Neighborhood, Inc. is an organization of diverse members dedicated to the preservation and revitalization of the neighborhood through:

- providing affordable housing to low-moderate income households,
- organizing and empowering community residents,
- promoting the neighborhood's interests and
- fostering an inclusive community that values diversity

Additionally, we are committed to moving forward in these three ways:

1. Because police accountability and racial justice are vital to the health of our neighborhood, and our greater South Bend community, we will make these issues a top priority for our community organizer to address, and facilitate spaces for neighbors to join in this work.
2. We will seek additional opportunities to have the difficult but necessary conversations required to move toward healing. We have been granted an opportunity by the Sisters of the Holy Cross to host a series of restorative justice circles focused on race. We are already putting together a planning team for this effort and will be in contact about ways you can participate.
3. We will seek to ensure that known disparities of housing opportunities and economic opportunities within the NNN and the community are addressed. We know this is, and shall remain, a major challenge for us all.

This work must be a shared calling, and we look forward to partnering with you, our neighbors, in the days ahead. We look forward to this work, where we can truly work to enjoy a community where all are invited to belong, where each and every person is seen, and where there is enough for everyone.

We are open to dialogue and your thoughts and reactions to this statement and our proposed mission changes. If you'd like to share your story with us, hear more about our conversations about this, or would like to dialogue about this, please contact us through the Executive Director, Kathy Schuth, at nnndirector@nearnorthwest.org and she will pass on correspondence.

We are your elected Board of the Near Northwest Neighborhood, Inc. and we have written and approve the sharing of this statement to our members.

Clark Glover, Board President
Mark Gould, Treasurer
Edenys Deynes
Muhammad Shabazz
Kelsey Lantz

Michael Hebbeler, Vice-President
Twila Newbill, Secretary
Jess Hunter-Bowman
Jessica Dieter

Note: This Mission Change was adopted by membership vote on August 11, 2020 and confirmed by the Board of Directors. The same membership vote elected Michael McGee and Mary Turgi to the NNN Board.

NNN Community Dates

The NNN Community Spaces remain closed due to Covid 19 levels. Call the office with questions.

2020 NNN ARTS CAFÉ is cancelled due to Covid 19. See you in 2021

The Local Cup has reopened for carry out and visiting out of doors on the patio/sidewalk. They are open Saturday, 9-1 and Sunday, 1-5.

Portage Farm Stands are in the NNN Parking Lot, every Saturday, 10-12 through October 31

Zumba starts 8/19/20 in the grassy NNN lot, 1009 California, Wednesdays, 5:30-6:30PM

South Bend Bike Garage is open Wednesdays at 907 Portage. Info at <https://sbbikegarage.com/>

A **Ward Bakery Building** redevelopment informational online meeting, coming in September. Learn More: LTHILL@macog.com or 574-287-1829.

Lead Grants Available

Funding is still available through the City of South Bend for grants to income-qualified homeowners for lead abatement or interim controls that make your housing safer. Property owners and landlords that rent to income-qualified tenants may qualify for grants or forgivable loans.

Who is eligible? Renters and homeowners who earn less than 80% of median income (\$54,000 for a family of 4). Call 311 for more information or more information is online at: <https://311.southbendin.gov/knowledgecenter/article/?id=KA-01818> or call the NNN Community Outreach Team (COT) at (574) 855-8196.

Thank you to Emily Holloway Dean

For those who have not yet heard, Emily Dean has moved off of the Community Outreach Team (COT) at the NNN to spend more time with family and friends. She will be volunteering for NNN activities as she is able.

Emily was a delight to work with. Her ability to listen, empathize and move small mountains will be missed. We wish you all the best, and look forward to continued collaboration, Emily!

Seeking contributions for the Common Ground: News You Can Use Feel free to write 100-300 words about your non-editorial neighborhood happenings. Subject to editing and space available, we welcome your contributions. Call the office for more information.

Complete Census 2020 NOW

Neighbors, by now you likely have received your Census forms or online codes in the mail. Quite simply – you are required to fill them out. We also urge you to fill them out. Results from the Census influence how \$650+ billion in annual funds are distributed across the country. Programs affected by the census include: National School Lunch Program, Head Start, Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and Medical Assistance Program among many other funding count areas.

But what about my privacy?

By Federal law, Census responses are confidential and cannot be shared with anyone, including law enforcement, immigration, and tax agencies.

How do I fill out the census?

You can respond online, by mail, or by phone. If you don't want to or can't respond in those ways, a Census worker will safely check on the status of your Census form and help get it completed.

What is Census Day?

Census Day was April 1, 2020. This means that you'll fill out your Census form based on your household on that date.

Questions? Comments? Ideas? Get in touch with the City and our partners by emailing census2020@southbendin.gov or email Kat Redding, our COT Team member at kat@nearnorthwestneighborhood.org.

You have until the end of September to respond.